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The Bayonets of the Republic

Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791–94

John A. Lynn
To Andrea Lynn,

who has had to wait

far too long for

this dedication
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Acknowledgments

I hope the reader will understand if I take this opportunity to pay my bills in public. In a very real sense Bayonets of the Republic has been twenty years in the writing, since I first broached the subject when still an undergraduate at the University of Illinois. Over such a long period I have benefited from the advice, aid, and comfort of many individuals.

Let me express my debt to those who guided my studies and shaped my standards in historical work, Charles Nowell, Richard Schwab, Peter Paret, Andrew Lossky, and the late B. H. Liddell Hart. Among the mentors who have helped me so much I must single out Isser Woloch, now of Columbia University and once of UCLA. He has been both my strongest critic and staunchest supporter for fifteen years.

The staff of the Archives de la guerre at Vincennes were of the greatest possible service to my research. I also enjoyed the kind assistance of personnel at the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Archives Nationales, and the municipal library of Valenciennes.

My thanks as well to Paddy Griffith, whose graduate paper on infantry attacks gave me important methodological insights which aided my research.

I have been assisted in the preparation of this manuscript by the counsel of Samuel F. Scott and Jean-Paul Bertaud. They have been the best of friends, both to me and to my scholarship. In fact, without the constant assistance of Jean-Paul it is hard to see how my book would have ever been completed. Others I must thank for their suggestions concerning the manuscript are Morris Janowitz, Theodore Ropp, Blair Kling, and Paul Schroeder. For his investment of time and energy far beyond the call of duty, I want to acknowledge my dear friend and colleague Frederic Jaher.

I also must recognize the financial support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which awarded me a grant to study the political education of the revolutionary army.

The years devoted to this project have been made richer by the very real
support and kindness of some other fine people: Adelle S. Lynn, Judd and Jean Lynn, Susan Sackett, Ralph and Janice Rosenfeld, Vicki Berger, Harry and Helyn Kramer, and Richard and Sharon White. Thanks as well to Robert and Monique Auger of Montreuil and Amponville who have done so much to help me understand the strong character of the sans-culottes.

And, lastly, thanks upon thanks to my wife Andrea and my sons Daniel and Nathanael, who have had to travel the ups and downs of the path that led to The Bayonets of the Republic.
Preface to the 1996 Edition

Picking up *The Bayonets of the Republic* again is a bit like returning home after a long absence. It is where I started but not where I have been for the last decade or more; since *Bayonets* appeared, my primary efforts have been devoted to the study of the French army of the *grand siècle*. Even so, absence has not dulled my enthusiasm for the topics covered, and, in fact, I believe I understand them better now for having gone in other directions. Maybe you can’t truly go home again, but in my case I come back with bags full and am glad to visit old haunts, at least for awhile.

Being given a second chance to present *Bayonets* to readers allows me not only to correct the text and update my discussion of related works but to clarify the reason I wrote the book back then. Of course, *Bayonets* sought to increase our understanding of the Revolution and its army, but the volume also provided a case study of how the “new military history” and more traditional approaches could augment each other when combined. For the past two decades, the “new military history” has tended to avoid the hard business of warfare and has all too often dwelt on peripheral subjects acceptable to modern sensibilities. In contrast, my purpose was to demonstrate how the subject matter and the methodology of social history can tell us a great deal more about the way armies fight. I self-consciously tried to provide a model synthesis that would answer John Keegan’s challenge to pursue military history in different and illuminating ways that continue to focus on battle, but which eschew the “battle piece.”

My homecoming must take note of several important works on the revolutionary armies that have appeared since 1984. In a great service to English-speaking readers, R. R. Palmer translated Jean-Paul Bertaud’s classic study, *La Révolution armée*, as *The Army of the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). It remains the unsurpassed study of the army as a political force during the Revolution. Alan Forrest has contributed two volumes to the literature: his *Conscripts and Deser-

Perhaps the most interesting study to appear recently concerns not the army but the navy: Revolution and Political Conflict in the French Navy, 1789–1794 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), by William S. Cormack. As a subject and extension of central authority, the navy often sailed on a collision course with local independence. In contrast to the army, which spread across the frontier, the navy harbored in a handful of port towns, most notably Brest, Rochefort, and Toulon, where, as a constant presence and a major employer of civilian dockyard workers, it could not escape becoming enmeshed in municipal politics. When port towns contested the authority of Paris, the navy was bound to be buffeted about. Cormack’s naval study makes a very good companion and contrast to Bertaud’s work on the army.


While the above pieces touch on some of the subject matter dealt with in the first edition of Bayonets, they do not require that it be recast. In fact, I have decided to leave the text as originally presented except for correcting certain factual and typographical errors.

In closing, let me repeat my thanks to those who got me here in the first place: most notably my wife, Andrea, and to Westview Press and my friend and editor Peter Kracht for giving me the chance to say it all again.

John A. Lynn
Champaign, Illinois
SECTION ONE

Victory in the North
Chapter 1

The Armée du Nord on Campaign

Few readers can be expected to know the history of the Armée du Nord. For most, its triumphs merge into the broad flow of revolutionary events, and its victories belong not to one army but to France. Commanders of the Nord are more likely to stir memories—the comte de Rochambeau, the marquis de Lafayette, Charles François Dumouriez, and Jean Baptiste Jourdan—yet they too are but seldom associated with the army they led. Since analysis requires context, the following narrative history of the Nord introduces the names and events discussed throughout this volume. It joins together in proper sequence elements that will later be dissected for detailed study. It also suggests that the explanation of French victory in the North lies in the citizen-soldiers who made up the Armée du Nord.

Prelude to War

By 1791 the French feared armed intervention by the monarchs of Europe, and after Louis XVI attempted to flee the country in June of that year, war seemed all but inevitable. Yet, in fact, Austria, Prussia, and Russia were far from agreeing on any joint course of action toward revolutionary France. Mutual distrust and the lingering question of Poland's fate precluded them from forming a common front. Despite the lack of a real threat, the French edged toward war, since the most powerful factions in Paris saw war as a servant of their own political aims. But had the French politicians truly understood the weakness of their armed forces, they might not have so lustily voted to declare war against the Hapsburgs on 20 April 1792.

The first two years of the Revolution had greatly weakened the French army. Egalitarian ideas corroded discipline, while the turbulent confusion of the times resulted in a high rate of desertion. A rapid turnover in com-
mand, occasioned by the emigration of nearly 60 percent of all officers, struck the army still harder. On 1 January 1791 the National Assembly authorized a peacetime army of 157,000 men, yet the real strength of French forces did not exceed 130,000. After much debate the Assembly voted to shore up the defenses of France by calling up National Guard volunteers. The old regular, or line, army of the ancien régime did not enjoy the full confidence of the legislators. The new volunteer battalions seemed more politically reliable. At first these volunteer battalions constituted only a kind of inactive reserve force, but in the heated session of 21 June 1791, when the Legislative Assembly learned of Louis's flight, they were mobilized to stand alongside the understrength regular army. Volunteers and regulars alike were in need of discipline and training.

Troops moved up to the frontiers during the summer of 1791, but only in December did the government set up three major armies along France's eastern border. Entrusted with the frontier from Landau to Huningue, the Armée du Rhin numbered about 49,000 troops under the command of Marshal Nicolas, baron Luckner. From Montmedy to Bitche stood the Armée du Centre with about 30,000 men under the marquis de Lafayette. And from the Meuse to the sea the Armée du Nord stretched its nearly 53,000 soldiers commanded by Marshal Jean-Baptiste de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, possibly the ablest officer in the French high command. As the war expanded, enveloping ever more of the French frontier and claiming ever more manpower, the French Republic by mid-1794 would be defended by eleven armies totaling roughly 750,000 men. Throughout the period 1792–94, however, the Nord remained the largest single assemblage of French fighting men.

Early Trials and Setbacks

As soon as war was declared, the government in Paris, pressed by its foreign minister Charles François Dumouriez, ordered Rochambeau to send his ill-trained and inexperienced battalions against a numerically smaller Austrian force in the Austrian Netherlands. The Marshal wisely objected to this unreasonable demand on the basis that even his line units needed more training before they could face the excellent Hapsburg troops, but his objections were overruled. On 28 April General Théobald Dillon led a column of some 2,300 troops from Lille toward Tournai. Meeting a small force of Austrians just across the border, he decided to withdraw the next day, but an orderly retreat proved too much for his soldiers, and they panicked. On 29 April 1792 General Dillon met his death at the hands of his own troops who shouted, "We are betrayed!" and "Every man for himself!" as they fled in utter rout. The same day saw Armand-Louis de Gontaut, duc de Biron, depart Valenciennes with some 15,000 men in an
MAP 1. The Campaigns of the Armée du Nord, 1792-94.
attempt to take the fortress of Mons. His command never reached Mons but instead turned back before it got as far as Jemappes. Panic seized Biron's retreating troops just as it had gripped Dillon's, but, fortunately, Biron escaped with his life. These defeats stimulated the Assembly to call for a new levy of volunteers, the Volunteers of 1792. Circumstances confirmed Rochambeau's judgment, but, since the government was reluctant to let him exercise command as he saw fit, he submitted his resignation.

Dumouriez, who virtually ran the Ministry of War as well as foreign affairs, now chose Marshal Luckner, commander of the Armée du Rhin, to replace Rochambeau. The interim command of the Rhin went to General Alexis Magallon, comte de La Morlière. Luckner for some inexplicable reason enjoyed considerable favor with the revolutionaries at this time. The marvelous "Chant de guerre pour l'Armée du Rhin," known later simply as "La Marseillaise," was even composed in his honor. Yet the fact remained that he possessed only the most mediocre of skills. His military reputation rested on his feats as a daring leader of Hanoverian light cavalry against the French in the Seven Years' War. He arrived at Valenciennes on 15 May, and after less than a month with the Nord, this bumbling septuagenarian led 20,000 troops of his army from the Camp de Famars near Valenciennes on a futile invasion of Flanders. Marching first to Lille, he finally took both Menin and Courtrai on 19 June. But Luckner's timidity in command of an army exceeded his temerity in command of a squadron, and without good reason he withdrew from both towns on 30 June and returned to Lille.

Now occurred a most strange maneuver, the chassé-croisé. Lafayette, first and always a political general, desired to play a greater role in the affairs of government. He reasoned that if his troops were closer to Paris he might rise to become the arbiter of French politics. Consequently, he conspired to switch commands with Luckner, since Luckner's Nord lay closer to Paris than did Lafayette's Centre. Yet while he wished to exchange commands, Lafayette was unwilling to part with the battalions serving under him, because he believed they bore him special loyalty. Consequently, Lafayette proposed that not only the commanders trade places but also that their entire armies switch names and positions. Incredible as it may seem, this insane maneuver received the ministry's approval. The government forced Lafayette to accept only one alteration in his plans. The fallen Dumouriez, who had joined the Armée du Nord on 1 July, used what influence he still had in Paris to win the right to remain with the troops he commanded on the northeast frontier. In charge of the entrenched Camp de Maube, he would cover the frontier while the two armies changed places. In mid-July the actual exchange took place without serious incident.
The Armée du Nord on Campaign

The turn of events now intervened to give the Nord still another commander-in-chief and to provide revolutionary France with a new hero. The threatened Prussian invasion under Karl-Wilhelm-Ferdinand, duke of Brunswick, charged the Parisian air with fear and determination. On 11 July 1792 the Legislative Assembly proclaimed, "Citoyens, la Patrie est en danger." Then on 1 August Paris heard of Brunswick’s ill-considered and ill-timed manifesto threatening to destroy Paris should any harm befall Louis XVI. The revolutionary crowd answered this challenge to its bravery and integrity with the revolution of 10 August 1792. Lafayette, a man of the Revolution perhaps, but always a royalist as well, now labored to invest the political capital he had acquired in the chassé-croisé. On 15 August he tried to get his troops at Sedan to take an oath to the king, but he no longer commanded their loyalty. With his army unwilling to march on Paris to restore the king, Lafayette on 19 August crossed the frontier and surrendered himself to the Allies, who imprisoned him for the next five years. Two days before he fled, the Assembly had voted the command of the Nord to Dumouriez.

Dumouriez’s Fall Campaigns

Dumouriez could not have been more pleased; he had long advocated an invasion of the Austrian Netherlands, which he could now undertake. He proposed that the best way to stop the Prussian advance would be by an offensive in the north, but the wary Paris government ordered him to bring his army south to defend the capital. This he reluctantly agreed to do, and on 1 September Dumouriez led the majority of the Nord south from Sedan. At this point begins a rather confusing problem with names. Dumouriez chose to christen the battalions now moving south toward the Argonne the Armée des Ardennes, though in actuality they were only part of the Armée du Nord and not a separate army. The Ardennes was to the Nord as a task force is to a fleet. From September 1792 until June 1794 the Ardennes existed as a separate unit, but it would always be subordinate to the Nord’s commander. So closely connected were the two that historians often refer to the Armée du Nord et des Ardennes. The coming months witnessed the creation of two other task force armies, the Armée de la Belgique and the Armée de la Hollande; like the Ardennes they constituted mere subdivisions of the Nord, although unlike the Ardennes they were both defunct by mid-1793.

Dumouriez threw the Armée des Ardennes into the wooded hills of the Argonne in an attempt to bar the Prussian advance on Paris. The Armée des Ardennes displayed unexpected determination and ability for several days, which bought valuable time for the French. But owing to a nearly
Map 2. The Main Battleground of the Armée du Nord.
fatal instance of confusion, the pass at Croix-aux-bois was left unguarded, and Brunswick's troops were able to seize it on 12 July. The Armée du Nord then withdrew toward St. Menehould and a rendezvous with the Armée de Centre, now under the command of General François-Etienne Kellermann. Units of the Ardennes did the best they could, marching and fighting their way south. Combats took place at Grand-Pré on the 15th, at Clermont on the 17th, and elsewhere until Kellermann and Dumouriez finally joined forces on 19 September 1792. The next day Kellermann's troops faced Brunswick's army; Dumouriez's harried and tired battalions stood in reserve. More cannonade than battle, the battle of Valmy stopped the Prussian advance, and, although Brunswick's army was not destroyed, Kellermann gave the Republic a complete strategic victory that day. After more than a week of inactivity, Brunswick began his retreat on 30 September. Dumouriez and the Ardennes had greatly aided in the task so well completed by the Centre. Now he could turn his attention once more to the Low Countries.

Dumouriez confided the command of the Armée des Ardennes to General Jean-Baptiste de Timbrune, comte de Valence, and it began its march back to the north. Dumouriez detoured to Paris in order to win support for his plans. He was authorized to attack the Austrian Netherlands, which the French already called Belgium, with the 88–95,000 troops grouped together in his command. To oppose this invasion the Austrians could muster only perhaps half that number. No longer the inexperienced and panicky troops of April, these French soldiers who massed along the border displayed a new confidence gained through training and on the battlefield. The men suffered the matériel shortages that would plague the Nord for years, but they were eager to fight. On 3 November Dumouriez set his troops in motion from Valenciennes toward Mons, while he ordered the rest of his command in Lille, Maubeuge, and elsewhere to carry out diversions to occupy Austrian attention. After preliminary skirmishes at Boussu on the 3rd and Quaregnon on the 5th, on the 6th Dumouriez's main body of 30,000 joined by 10,000 Volunteers of 1792 under the command of General Louis-Auguste des Ursins, comte d'Harville, formed in order of battle below the town of Jemappes, situated a short distance from Mons. At noon Dumouriez launched his main assault against the 14,000 Austrians holding the heights. In tightly packed columns his battalions marched directly at the enemy. The outcome could not long be in doubt; by two o'clock the Austrians were in retreat, although they had put up an admirable fight. That same day, to the north, other French forces defeated an Austrian detachment at Le Blaton, and on the 7th still other units of the Nord clashed with the Austrians at Halluin. Further victories, however, were unnecessary to establish French control of Belgium—the battle of Jemappes decided the issue.
The Hard Winter and Bitter Spring

French troops now poured into Belgium. Dumouriez himself led what he called the Armée de la Belgique; he delegated the command of the Armée des Ardennes to Valence and the small Armée du Nord first to Anne-François, comte de La Bourdonnaye, and later to Francisco de Miranda. By the end of December the French held Brussels and Liege. But this success had in fact seriously weakened French forces in the Low Countries. Men who had flocked to the tricolor in support of "la Patrie en danger" reasoned that victory, delivering the Republic from its foes, gave them the right to return to their homes. For those who remained with their battalions there was no time for rest, reorganization, and reequipping. Training proved impossible, since the soldiers dispersed into small groups to survive the worst of the winter months as best they could. Had the home government more faithfully and efficiently supplied its victorious troops, perhaps they could have been assembled in large camps where training exercises could have been conducted. For this tired and disorganized army, the worst trials were yet to come. On 1 February 1793 the Convention declared war on England and on the Dutch Netherlands. Dumouriez then received orders to invade Holland. To undertake this ill-considered attack he assembled a force of some 23,000, new recruits in the main. This army, christened the Armée de la Hollande, advanced toward Antwerp on 16 February. Meanwhile its sister armies were engaged in the siege of Maestricht. All told, the various armies under Dumouriez boasted a paper strength of over 122,000, but in reality this total must be discounted.

On 24 February 1793, the representatives sitting in the National Convention in Paris declared the levy of 300,000 men, but these new recruits would not be assembled and trained in time to help stay the tide of Austrian victories that would soon sweep the French out of Belgium. While the republican troops busied themselves with the siege of Maestricht and the invasion of Holland, the prince of Coburg gathered together an Austrian army of 100,000. On 1 March 1793 this formidable array crossed the Roer River, catching the French by surprise. Dumouriez rushed south, leaving the Armée de la Hollande under General Louis-Charles de La Motte-Ango, marquis de Flers. The French abandoned Maestricht and recoiled back on Louvain. With about 40,000 infantry and 4,500 cavalry Dumouriez resolved to attack Coburg's 30,000 infantry and 9,000 cavalry. On 18 March, at Neerwinden, occurred the great battle Dumouriez desired. Considering the poor condition of the French troops, they performed well. On the center and right they fought the Austrians to a bloody standstill, but the troops under General Miranda on the French left broke and retreated on Tirlemont. After the defeat of Neerwinden, Dumouriez at-
tempted to stand again at Louvain on the 22nd, but by then it was hopeless. To spare the fruitless loss of additional lives and to insure the retreat of his widely scattered forces, Dumouriez negotiated a convention with the enemy. By not contesting the Austrian advance his troops would themselves be unmolested in their withdrawal to the French border. Dumouriez's negotiations, however, had a treasonable goal, since he proposed using his army to reestablish the monarchy in Paris. Unhappy with the defeat Dumouriez had just suffered and fearful of his secret negotiations, the Convention wisely dispatched commissioners to arrest him. On 1 April these commissioners found him at his headquarters, but he turned the tables on them and had them arrested. Later they were handed over to Coburg. In only four more days, however, Dumouriez found his situation untenable, and like Lafayette he went over to the Austrians. The treason of Dumouriez filled the Convention with an excessive fear of its own generals. From then on the shadow of the guillotine followed the footsteps of even the most successful officers.

The next commander of the Armée du Nord et des Ardennes, General Auguste Picot, marquis de Dampierre, seemed dwarfed by the tasks set before him. The disheartened and disorganized battalions under his command had been eroded by desertion during the long retreat, and Dampierre could only bring them back to strength by rapidly incorporating raw levies into their ranks. From an objective military standpoint, this was the Revolution's darkest hour; all that stood between Paris and the fine Austrian troops in Coburg's army were defeated battalions and a few poorly defended fortresses. In addition to the crisis in the north, the comte de Custine's Armée du Rhin was in retreat, and rebellion shook the Vendée. Luckily, the Allies forswore a major invasion of France in 1793. The Paris government mirrored the seriousness of this situation by passing a great deal of revolutionary legislation. Committees of Surveillance were to be established in every commune. A new revolutionary Tribunal was created in Paris. The famous and feared Representatives on Mission received almost unlimited power to perform their civil and military tasks. And to direct the entire war effort, the Committee of Public Safety, created in April 1793, rose to heights of executive power that even Louis XIV could not have rivaled.

Coburg decided to besiege Valenciennes, gateway on the road to Paris. Near that fortress, in the Camp de Famars, Dampierre mustered what force he could to keep the Austrians from realizing their goal. Mercifully for the tormented Dampierre, his trials were not to last long, for on 8 May 1793 he received a mortal wound in battle outside the Camp de Famars. That attempt to meet the Austrians in battle ended only in one more French defeat. To General François Joseph Drouet, known as General Lamarche, fell the unenviable task of carrying on the defense of Valenciennes as in-
term commander of the Armée du Nord. On 23 May the Austrians attacked again, this time assisted by English troops under the duke of York. Bottled up in the Camp de Famars, the main body of Lamarche's command awaited the onslaught, and it was defeated by the Austrian and English forces. That night, Lamarche left General Jean-Henri-Becays Ferrand to defend the fortress of Valenciennes itself and withdrew the main force to the Camp de César, some fifteen miles to the southwest of Valenciennes. Valenciennes and Condé were both besieged by the end of the month.

The Regeneration of the Nord

On 27 May 1793 General Adam Philippe, comte de Custine, arrived at Cambrai to take permanent command of the Armée du Nord. Although the victim of serious defeats earlier in the spring, Custine still enjoyed a considerable reputation. Throughout the months of June and July, while the Austrians and English busied themselves with sieges, Custine labored to reorganize and train the troops of the Nord. At Cambrai he set up a training camp for men picked from every battalion in the Nord and Ardennes for the purpose of giving them a crash course in infantry drill and then sending them back to their battalions to teach what they had just learned. A strict disciplinarian, Custine possessed an autocratic and independent character, which brought him into controversy with the Ministry of War. He was still popular with his men, since they apparently thought him able to turn the Nord into a more creditable fighting force. Custine fought no battles with the Nord; rather, he devoted the two months to better pursuits; but unfortunately he suffered defeats without risking battles. On 12 July 1793 Condé fell to the Austrians. Four days later Custine obeyed a summons from the Committee of Public Safety and journeyed to Paris. He was arrested on 22 July, and his fate was sealed by the fall of Valenciennes on the 28th.

General Charles-Edouard Jennings de Kilmaine, of Irish ancestry, then became the interim commander of the Nord. His only military act of any significance while in command of the Nord took place when he ordered his troops to abandon the Camp de César in the face of an imminent attack by Coburg. When the attack came on 8 August, it fell on empty space. The Nord had moved to the Camp de Gavrelle. Kilmaine shortly thereafter handed over command to General Jean-Nicolas Houchard, who possessed only one advantage over Kilmaine—he was French. The Armée du Nord and the Armée des Ardennes now in Houchard's hands mustered a total strength of over 175,000 men. Houchard seemed hardly the man to command such a force. Significantly, he was the first permanent commander of the Nord who had no claim to nobility. He was the sans-culotte
The Armée du Nord on Campaign

general demanded by the radicals. Yet he could boast only the mediocre talents of a dragoon with scant intelligence or force of character. Luckily for the brave but dull Houchard, although the road to Paris now lay open to the Allies, they refused to march down it. The rules of eighteenth-century warfare forbade Coburg to leave his lines of communication exposed to an enemy army. The duke of York also determined that the English must have Dunkirk to serve as a base for further operations. While the English marched north to besiege Dunkirk, Coburg besieged Le Quesnoy. During the English march, there were some minor brushes with the French. At Linselles on 18 August, for example, a small force of English under Colonel Lake routed a larger force of French troops under Generals Jean-Baptiste Jourdan and Antoine Lecour de Béru.

At the insistence of the Committee of Public Safety, Houchard and the Representatives on Mission with the Armée du Nord resolved to thwart the English siege as best they could; they had little choice. In late August Houchard marshaled his forces for an attack on the Hanoverian and English troops covering the siege. On the 24th General Théodore-François Leclaire drove the Allies out of Esquelbecque, only to see them retake it. On the 27th the French won the towns of Roncq, Lannoy, and Tourcoing, thus clearing the way for an advance against the Hanoverian army covering the siege of Dunkirk. After suffering a mild setback at Rexpoede on the night of 6–7 September, Houchard and 22,000 French troops confronted General Johan Ludwig von Walmoden's 14,600 Hanoverians across the marshes and hedges of Hondschoote on the 8th. Advocates of mass shock action, Houchard and his chief of staff General Etienne-Ambroise Berthélémy disapproved of this particular battlefield, since it hampered confrontation with the bayonet. Early in the battle the French dispersed into small bands, finding cover where they could and firing into the Hanoverian defenses. Only with great effort and some threat was Houchard able to rally his soldiers for a final onslaught, which carried the day for the French. Complete victory eluded the Republicans, however, since Walmoden withdrew his troops with little difficulty. There was no pursuit, a failure that was to cost Houchard his life. The English did give up the siege, but instead of crushing the enemy, Houchard had only caused them to draw back. Few permanent gains flowed from this victory. Le Quesnoy surrendered to the Austrians on 11 September, and, although the French had success in some serious engagements on the 12th at Werwik and Avesnes-le-sec and on the 13th at Menin, by 15 September Menin was again in Allied hands. The Committee of Public Safety then relieved Houchard of his command on 22 September, the first day of the momentous Year II in the new revolutionary calendar. The day after he lost his command he was arrested. On 16 November he became the third commander of the Nord
to lose his head; Luckner and Custine had preceded him to the guillotine. Mercifully, he also was the last of the Nord's commanding generals to suffer this fate.

The next man to take over the Nord kept his head and gained a great reputation. General Jourdan, a future Napoleonic marshal, received the responsibilities of the Nord after only a little more than a week as the subordinate commander of the Armée des Ardennes. He chose General Jean-Augustin, baron Ernouf, for his chief of staff, and they did not have to wait long to test their skills. After the fall of Le Quesnoy, Coburg concentrated his attention on Maubeuge. The timidity of the Allies may seem astounding; with a gap in the frontier defenses made by the Austrian occupation of Valenciennes, Condé, and Le Quesnoy, the Allies still refused to strike at Paris. Still, it was late in the year, and, encumbered by necessary supply lines, Coburg could hardly leave 175,000 armed Frenchmen in his rear. Maubeuge and the adjoining camp contained 20,000 men of the Armée des Ardennes. Seizure of the town and the destruction of its garrison would bode well for the next campaign. Jourdan sought to strike the covering force at Wattignies and by destroying it end the siege. Lazare Carnot, the Organizer of Victory, joined the Armée du Nord in the field as a Representative on Mission.

The battle of Wattignies lasted for two days, 15 and 16 October 1793. Although the Austrian General Charles de Croix, count von Clairfayt, had 37,000 men, during the battle he could resist Jourdan's 45,000 with only 21,000. Still Coburg, in supreme command, remained so confident of victory that he promised to become a sans-culotte should the French win. The events of the 15th almost proved Coburg right. The splendid Austrian battalions beat back wave after wave of the numerically superior French forces. Meanwhile, a small contingent of Allied troops stopped and later scattered an attempted flanking maneuver by General Jacob-Job Elie and 3,500 troops from Philippeville. Elie's battalions broke and fled at Beaumont on the 16th. The night of 15-16 October saw Carnot and Jourdan change their basic plan. On the 15th the French had attacked all along the Austrian line; on the 16th the great bulk of Jourdan's army would concentrate against the Austrian left wing. Though massively outnumbered, the Austrian left fought well and hard, but after two unsuccessful attacks the third carried away the Austrian defenders. As at Hondschoote, pursuit was out of the question, and the Austrian and Dutch forces around Maubeuge retreated without serious challenge. Shortly after the battle of Wattignies, General Jean-Baptiste Davaine launched an attack on the Allies in Flanders, but this tardy effort came to nothing. Combats at Cysoing on 20 October, Tilleul on 23 October, and elsewhere led to no real alteration of the frontier. Menin once again fell to the French only to be evacuated as before on 27 October. General-in-Chief Jourdan himself received orders to pursue
the enemy down the Sambre, but, at the risk of his life, he refused. On 6 January 1794 the Minister of War ordered the reluctant Jourdan and his chief of staff to come to Paris, where both men were relieved of command.

The Nord in Triumph

Upon Jourdan's departure, the interim command of the Nord devolved upon Ferrand, a veteran soldier of France. Then, on 8 February 1794, General Jean Charles Pichegru arrived to take charge of the Nord for the rest of its combat career. Previously a commander of the Armée du Rhin, he was a man of experience. The army, or rather armies, he now led numbered about 207,000 for the Nord and 36,000 for the Ardennes. Although this strength could only be achieved through incorporating large numbers of new recruits, the Nord would not take the field in 1794 as undisciplined and unmaneuverable units. Commanders used the time purchased by Jourdan to train their men. Since the majority of the battalions were grouped together in major camps instead of dispersed over the countryside, the possibility existed for serious mass drill. The Armée du Nord that took the field in the spring of 1794 would be a superior force to that of either 1792 or 1793.

The crucial campaign of 1794 revolved around two river axes, the Sambre to the south and the Scheldt and Lys to the north. Pichegru possessed an uncanny ability to be absent whenever any major battle occurred on either front. The spring combat began when Pichegru ordered the divisions of Generals Antoine Balland, Jacques-Gilles Goguet, and Jacques-Pierre Fromentin along the Sambre axis to attack Cateau-Cambrésis on 29 March 1794. This attack ended in failure, French casualties numbering over 1,000. The republicans would not again take up the offensive for about a month. The initiative passed to the Austrians who began a siege of Landrecies in mid-April. An attempt by the troops of Goguet's and Balland's divisions to relieve Landrecies on 21 April resulted only in another defeat.

Pichegru attempted to rectify a nearly impossible command situation by conferring the command of the entire right wing of the Nord on Ferrand. The Nord had always been too large for one man to control, and, although the Ardennes had always had a separate chief, this still left the man in charge of the Nord with too great a responsibility. Technically now, Pichegru would directly supervise the troops between the Scheldt and the Lys, while Ferrand would take charge, under Pichegru, of all troops along the Sambre. In reality, the command structure still left much to be desired. Ferrand, his subordinate commanders, and the Representatives on Mission vied for authority. Only the arrival of Jourdan with troops from the Armée de la Moselle in June would truly give the French right wing the
unity and independence it required. (Jourdan received command of the Moselle after a short retirement.)

Ferrand resolved upon a new attempt to relieve Landrecies, and to this end he planned a massive advance by several divisions along a broad front. The beginning of the advance on 24 April was attended by some brushes with the enemy as at Silenrieux, but the real confrontation took place on the 26th. Balland's division from Maubeuge was routed; Chapuis's ill-fated division was crushed at Troisvilles. Some limited success came to troops led by General Jean-Baptiste, baron Cacault, at Boussu, but the defeat of other parts of the advance eventually made his position untenable. Once again the Allies failed to exploit their victory, and the only fruit they harvested for all their labor was the fall of Landrecies on 30 April 1794. The French at least took the opportunity to dismiss some incompetent division commanders. General Jacques-Philippe Bonnaud took over the division of General René-Bernard Chapuis, who had fallen prisoner during the disaster of the Troisvilles. His own troops assassinated General Goguet; his division went to General Paul-Alexis Dubois, recently brought up from the Armée de la Moselle. The excellent General Jean-Baptiste Kléber replaced General Balland.

To aid in the relief of Landrecies, Pichegru decided to launch an attack in the north, where he chose to exercise personal command. To this end he marshaled the divisions of Generals Joseph Souham, Jean-Victor Moreau, and Pierre-Antoine Michaud. Numbered among the brigade commanders of these northern divisions were two generals destined to become distinguished Napoleonic military figures, Etienne-Jacques MacDonald and Dominique-Joseph Vandamme. Pichegru, after having set up an advance in West Flanders, went off to attend to other duties; he left General Souham in charge of the entire operation. Souham aimed at the seizure of Menin and Courtrai, which promised to be soft targets, since the Allies had concentrated further south. On 27 April all went well as the French took Werwik and crossed into Austrian territory. The next day, however, Clairfayt brought up an Austrian and Hanoverian force to strike the French right at Mouscron. Clairfayt drove the French out of Mouscron, but Souham refused to let even a day pass before turning in greater numbers on Clairfayt himself. The day of 28 April was not to bring any of the tragedy brought by the 26th. Souham himself led the attack that afternoon, using the brigades of Generals MacDonald, Henry-Antoine Jardon, Nicolas Bertin, and Hermann-Wilhelm, comte Daendels. Souham turned Mouscron into a considerable French victory, boding well for the subsequent campaign. Meanwhile other troops in his command had surrounded and besieged Menin. Much of the garrison escaped on the morning of 29 April, but the remainder surrendered later that day. Courtrai also soon fell into French hands.
With the capitulation of Landrecies, the main body of the Allied army now marched north to concentrate against the French occupying Menin and Courtrai. Action flamed high during the second week of May. On the 10th, Bonnaud's division met defeat at the hands of the English near Baisieux. The same day Souham struck west from Courtrai, but when the town had been weakened by his withdrawal Clairfayt attacked it. Only quick action and hard fighting by the brigades of Vandamme and Daendels drove off the Austrians. The stage was now set for a great French victory. With the Allied troops gathering in the neighborhood of Courtrai, Coburg and the duke of York adopted a plan by the much-vaunted General Karl Leiberich, baron Mack, for a gigantic envelopment of the entire force under Souham’s command. By employing six widely separated columns, Mack hoped to cut off and annihilate the invading French. This plan, however, required a high degree of coordination and timing, while at the same time it allowed the French to concentrate their resistance on isolated elements of the Allied army.

As the Allied net tightened around the divisions of Souham and Moreau, an objective observer might have given the French very little chance of success. Seventy-three thousand Allied troops menaced a force of only 60,000 French. In the past the French had required a significant numerical advantage even to fight the Allies to a draw; what chance had they now? But Souham rose to the occasion. Out of the doomsday reports coming in to his headquarters at Courtrai, he learned that in reality only three of the six columns posed a serious immediate threat and that by throwing Moreau’s division against one of the three threatening columns he could concentrate his own division and that of Bonnaud at Lille against the other two. With a cool head, Souham thus massed 40,000 French against only 20,000 Allies. The several resultant engagements fought on 18 May within the triangle, Courtrai-Lannoy-Werwik, are all covered by the same title, the battle of Tourcoing.

On the morning of the 18th Vandamme’s brigade of Moreau’s division suffered heavily at the hands of Clairfayt’s large force of nearly 20,000. But these French troops possessed a new confidence and ability; Vandamme rallied them, and in an admirable feat his brigade alone stopped Clairfayt’s advance and threw his troops out of Linselles and Bousbecque. At Lannoy and Mouveaux the combined forces of Souham and Bonnaud caught the columns led by the duke of York and General Rudolph Otto off guard and unsupported. In the fighting to the south of Tourcoing the Allies lost over 5,500 men, killed, wounded, or captured. The French did not pursue the defeated Allies. After the battle of Tourcoing, Souham began an advance north toward Ypres and east toward the Scheldt. On 22 May 1794 the roughly equal forces of 50,000 clashed at Tournai. The drawn battle halted the French advance, but only temporarily. The Austrians concentrated
around Tournai, drawing troops away from Ypres, which the French then besieged.

After Tourcoing the center of attention shifted down to the Sambre. Throughout the month of May and for half of June the French south of the Sambre constantly and unsuccessfully battered against the Austrians facing them just across the river. The confused command structure, the intervention of inept Representatives on Mission, and the poor behavior of the soldiers jeopardized the chances of victory. Small Austrian forces beat back attack after attack by the French. At Grand-Reng on 12 and 13 May and again on the 20th and 21st and at Erquelinnes on the 24th the story was always the same. Even the fine performance of some brigades, such as the light infantry commanded by General Philibert-Guillaume Duhesmes, could not rescue the French from repeated setbacks. However, help arrived early in June. By a difficult march, Jourdan brought about 40,000 troops of his Armée de la Moselle north to the banks of the Sambre. This not only doubled the number of men available but also placed all the troops under a single general, since Jourdan received supreme command over the 20,000 men of the Nord and the 21,000 men of the Ardennes fighting on this front. In mid-June the French again crossed the Sambre, this time with the intention of besieging Charleroi. They invested the town, but on 16 June the Austrians again defeated them and drove them back across the river. It would be the last time.

On 18 June Jourdan’s troops began the siege of Charleroi again; that very day, to the north, Ypres fell into French hands. The Austrians had now concentrated their forces to the south; as of 23 June Coburg himself commanded the Austrians facing Charleroi. He lost heart after Tourcoing and regarded the large French forces before him with foreboding. Nevertheless obligated to relieve the siege, on 26 June 1794 he attacked the over 70,000 French troops entrenched around Fleurus. The French enjoyed a substantial, but not overwhelming numerical advantage, since Coburg had only about 52,000 soldiers. Coburg fell liable to much the same error he committed at Tourcoing; instead of concentrating his army for one great attack, he split it into five columns in an attempt to envelop the entire French position. Standing on the defensive, Jourdan successfully resisted all Austrian attacks and won a great triumph for the Republic. Austrian, English, and Dutch troops retreated, and the towns of Belgium fell again as they had in 1792. Some hard fighting remained, but victory was inevitable. The Austrian Netherlands was in French hands by the end of the year, and in 1795 Holland fell to the French.

The history of the Armée du Nord et des Ardennes came to a close in June 1794. On 29 June the Convention officially reconstituted Jourdan’s ad hoc assemblage of divisions from the Nord, Ardennes, and Moselle as a new army, the Armée de Sambre et Meuse. With this stroke, the Ardennes
ceased to exist and the Nord remained only as an ever-shrinking portion of its formal self. The main job of dealing with the Austrians fell to the Sambre et Meuse, which grew accordingly, while a victorious but now secondary Nord drove back the Dutch and English.

During its existence, 1791–94, the Armée du Nord et des Ardennes lost many battles but held the frontier largely intact and eventually defeated the armies sent against it. To what can the ultimately victorious career of the Nord be attributed? Certainly not to logistics. The French did not win in the northeast by virtue of a miracle of production and supply. Despite heroic efforts by the Committee of Public Safety, their troops suffered crippling shortages of food, equipment, and arms. The Nord subsisted on a much more meager diet of matériel than would have been considered acceptable by other contemporary forces. It is tempting to ascribe victory to the numerical superiority of the French; however, while this advantage unquestionably contributed to their success, it does not explain it. In the context of the entire theater the Nord outnumbered its opponents by a considerable margin. But examined battle by battle, the numerical differences were less outstanding. Consider in particular the three largest battles of 1794; the French were outnumbered at Tourcoing, equaled their foes at Tournai, and blessed with only a 7:5 edge at Fleurus. Due to the lack of equipment and training, a high percentage of the Nord was not with the field forces. It is also possible to sidestep the whole debate by citing the obvious truth that God does not always favor the biggest battalions and by noting that military history is full of examples in which an artful and determined few have defeated an unskilled or wavering multitude.

Turning to generalship, here again the French could boast of no clear advantage. Of the supreme commanders of the Nord, only Rochambeau, Dumouriez, and Jourdan stand up to scrutiny. The first two met defeat, and, although Jourdan won the battles of Wattignies and Fleurus, neither victory bears witness to any real military genius. Souham, who never commanded the entire Nord during these years, deserves the greatest praise for his leadership at Tourcoing, but this is the only battle of the Nord that demonstrated timing and finesse. If French generalship rarely rose above the mediocre, that of their enemies was not so debased as to account for Allied defeat. Granted, the strategic situation of the Allies was hardly to be envied. Divided command, divergent goals, and only partial commitment to victory in Belgium hampered them. The Austrians, chief among the forces arrayed against the Nord, had Polish affairs very much on their minds. But if Allied leadership may have made great strategic success unlikely, it was not abysmal enough to make French victory inevitable.

The best explanation for triumph along the Belgian frontier lies in the combat effectiveness of French troops. There is reason to argue that by 1794, the Allied troops who faced the Nord had deteriorated to a degree,
but this only highlights the importance of the growing fighting quality of republican battalions. A combination of high motivation plus effective tactics resulted in superior French performance. Troops were committed and spirited, possessed of both endurance and energy. The flexible combinations of infantry formations, ably supported by artillery, allowed them to adjust tactics to terrain and circumstance. As a consequence, an analysis of victory in the north must be an analysis of the combat effectiveness of the Armée du Nord.
Notes

Notes to “The Elements of Victory”


2. Colby, Masters, 83.

3. Baynes, Morale, 94; Marshall, Men against Fire, 158.

4. See Mandelbaum, Soldier Groups; Shibutani, Derelicts of Company K; Stouffer, American Soldier, 10–15, 33–38.

5. See Stouffer, American Soldier, 131–35; Moskos, American Enlisted Man, 154–56.


7. Stouffer, American Soldier, 321. In another impressive survey 85 percent answered that their family and friends were doing what they should to help win the war, that is, they were committed to the war effort. Committed people could be expected to appreciate the war effort more (322).


10. An unexcelled work on fear in battle and the wearing effect of time is Moran, Anatomy of Courage.

11. Ibid., ch. 15; Sarkesian, Combat Effectiveness, 102; Stouffer, American Soldier, 87–88; Ellis, Sharp End, 290–92.


13. These three works were Marshall, Men against Fire (1947), Shils and Janowitz, “Cohesion and Disintegration” (first published 1948), and Stouffer, American Soldier (1949).


15. Ibid., 130–31.


21. See George, *Chinese Communist Army*.


25. For a definition and diagram of combat effectiveness that places great emphasis on leadership, see Alexander L. George, “Primary Groups, Organization, and Military Performance,” in Little, *Handbook of Military Institutions*, 245–318.

*Notes to “The New Soldier”*


4. Bertaud, *La Révolution armée*, 37. This classification of rural and urban is accepted by Corvisier, Scott, and Bertaud. It goes back to works of the eighteenth century.

5. My figures generally differ slightly from Scott’s because I subtract unknown or indeterminant cases from the total before calculating percentages. This method makes Scott’s figures more consistent with Corvisier’s.

6. Scott, “Regeneration of the Line Army,” 318, reached this figure by studying the controles. Alexander Lameth, in his presentation to the National Assembly on 22 July 1791, estimated the army’s strength at the beginning of the year to have been 133,000. A more alarming figure of 120,000 was given by Lameth on 28 Jan. 1791 before the Assembly. Unless otherwise noted, in this and subsequent chapters, the details of actions taken in and by the National Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, and the National Convention have been taken from the *Archives parlementaires*, vols. 1–92 (Paris: 1867–1980). Such details will not be footnoted when the
date of an action or address is sufficient to guide the reader to the proper volume and page of the *Archives parlementaires*. When cited, the *Archives parlementaires* will be simply referred to as *AP*.


11. For this statistical profile of the Volunteers of 1791, see Bertaud, *La Révolution armée*, 67–68, 82–83. Some of the percentages he presents in *La Révolution armée* differ sharply from those contained in his *Valmy*. This is cause for some confusion.
12. Mathiez, *La victoire*, 68, speaks of battalions from the Marne and from Marseille composed largely of the poor. For other cases of large numbers of workers involved in 1791 battalions, see Bertaud, *Valmy*, 292–94.
17. Bertaud’s profile of the Volunteers of 1792 is contained in *La Révolution armée*, 82–83. See as well his *Valmy*, 300–302.
19. Dubois-Crance estimated the infantry at 113,000 line and 289,000 volunteers in early December 1792; with 31,000 cavalry and 10,000 artillery the total force would have been 447,000. *AP*, 58:335–39. The estimate presented in the consideration of February levies set the volunteers at only 113,500, while Scott puts line strength at 178,000, for a February total of 291,500. *AP*, 59:174; Scott, *Response of the Royal Army*, 178. For a statement of desired strength, see *AP*, 58:359.
20. Archives de la guerre (AG) X*74*, folder 7.
22. What statistical profile of the Levy of 300,000 Bertaud offers can be found in *La Révolution armée*, 103.
23. See Père Duchesne, #234; *Révolutions de Paris*, #199, #200.
24. Bertaud, *La Révolution armée*, 104; AG, B*16*, 1 Aug. 1793, printed order. See as well AG, B*16*, 4 Aug. 1793 orders; AG, X*78*, order on details of levy.
25. Bertaud’s count and statistical profile of the levée en masse can be found in *La Révolution armée*, 137–39.
26. Unless otherwise noted, in this and later chapters statements concerning the units present in the Nord, their size and brigading, as well as estimates of the strength of the entire Nord, are based on orders of battle, situation reports, and troop tableaux found in AG, B*1*249–54. These figures are, of course, paper figures.
31. Bertaud’s examination of the composition of the army in 1794 can be found in *La Révolution armée*, 174–75.
34. Excerpt from the contemporary *Des causes de la desertion* by de Vietinghoff in Desbrière and Sautai, *La cavalerie de 1740 à 1789*, 110.
42. “Chanson guerrier,” in *Le chansonnier patriote*, 78; untitled song in *Soirée de camp*, 11 (30 July 1794), 4; AG, X-2; Bertaud, *La Révolution armée*, 207.

**Notes to “The New Officer Corps”**

1. Concerning officers of fortune, see Wrong, “French Infantry Officer,” 139, 177–89. Wrong estimates the share of infantry officers of fortune at 10 percent. Bodinier, “Les officiers,” 61, presents figures demonstrating that in July 1789 officers of fortune constituted 10.6 percent of infantry officers and 12.9 percent of all officers.
2. Bien, “La réaction aristocratique.” The best of earlier works, Tuetey, *Les officiers*, estimated that at least one-third of infantry officers had been of non-noble birth during the Seven Years’ War.
4. Bien, “La réaction aristocratique,” is essentially a fundamental redefinition of the importance of the Séguir decree. It makes all other analyses obsolete.
number of officer-émigrés at 7,513. Only 8 percent of officers of fortune resigned or abandoned their commissions.

7. The November law supposedly applied until 1 Feb. 1792, but it was extended by legislation of 10 Apr. 1792. The 10 Apr. 1792 legislation is misreported in Scott, "Line Army, 1787-1793," 107; Belhomme, "Histoire de l'infanterie"; and Hanoteau, Histoire militaire. They claim the order reserved all positions of sous-lieutenants to NCOs. It does not; rather, it reasserts articles 3-7 of the November order.

8. Details on length of service and social composition of the officer corps come from Scott, "Line Army, 1787-1793," 256, 260-62, 271, 274. My figures differ slightly from Scott's, since I subtract the indeterminate cases from the total sample before computing percentages. For ease of comparison, although the ranks of colonel and lieutenant-colonel were replaced by newer titles of chef-de-brigade and chef-de-bataillon, I employ only the traditional ranks here.

9. The social analysis of officers from the Volunteers of 1791 is taken from Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 68-70, and Bertaud, Valmy, 297-99.

10. Details concerning officers of the Volunteers of 1792 are taken from Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 83-84, and Bertaud, Valmy, 303-5.


12. Thus between two sous-lieutenants both aspiring to a vacant lieutenancy, if one was a Volunteer of 1791 with three years total service, all as a sous-lieutenant, and the other a veteran line soldier with ten years total service, but only one as a sous-lieutenant, the veteran would receive the promotion. See Bertaud's discussion in "Le recrutement et l'avancement des officiers," 519-20.


14. Ibid., 523; Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 178; Six, Les généraux, 107. NCOs objected to the February law, and in at least one case frustrated NCOs went to the enemy. Recueil des actes du Comité de salut public (RACSP), 13:565-67.

15. Bertaud's profile of the officer corps in 1794 is in La Révolution armée, 182-84, 189, 191.


17. Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 277-78, 280-81.

18. See comments on illiterate officers made 13 Sept. 1793 before the Convention.


20. Woloch, French Veteran, 142.


22. Representative Duhem on 24 Sept. 1793.

23. Duchet, Deux volontaires, 93.

24. AG, B11, 9 Apr. 1793, poster signed Cochon, Lequinio, and Bellegarde.

25. RACSP, 3:465; Six, Les généraux, 204.


27. AG, B13, 6 June 1793; Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:254.


29. The most convenient source for the professional details of generals' lives is Six, Dictionnaire biographique.

30. Six, Les généraux, 26-27, 236. Six counts more than one sanction for one
man at times; if, for example, a man was suspended, then arrested, and finally sentenced to death, the total came to three sanctions.

31. Order of battle for main forces of the Nord on 24 Oct. 1792 in La Jonquière, Jemmapes, 49-51; Six, Dictionnaire biographique.

32. Thibault, Mémôres, 1:444.

33. Père Duchesne, #260, #259.

34. Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:203, 186.

35. Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 153.


37. See Duhem’s comments in AP, 75:84; 5 Sept. 1792 report by Carnot in Charavay, Correspondance de Carnot, 1:151; Reinhard, Carnot, 2:45-46.

38. Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 177.

39. Archives nationales (AN), AFn234, dossier 2015. See as well correspondence in AG, B1*146.


41. Maréchal, La constitution, 115.

42. AP, 64:216.


44. Bertaud argues that the campaign against Custine and the demand to drive all nobles away from the army were sans-culotte issues more than they were Jacobin policies. Although they were often divided against themselves, on the whole the Jacobins spoke for a more middle-class constituency and favored a more centralized government than did the Hébertists, who relied upon the heavily working-class sans-culottes and who desired more direct democracy on the local level. With good reason, the Jacobin lynchpin was the Committee of Public Safety, while the sans-culotte loci of power were the sections, or wards, and the Commune of Paris.


46. AG, B115; Chuquet, Lettres de 1793, 172, 174-84, 244-47, 257-65.

47. AG, B112*; AG, B123, 2 Dec. 1793; AP, 87:260; Gross, “Saint-Just,” 1032-33. See AG, B1*146 for lists of suspensions and arrests in the Nord during fall 1793.

48. Calandini’s letters AG, B112, 15 June 1793, and Chuquet, Lettres de 1793, 211; Representative Dubarran report on 23 Mar. 1794, AP, 87:260-61; Bouchotte in Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:293; RACSP, 15:283; Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 177.

49. See AG, B112*29 for club denunciations; order in AN, AFn233, dossier 2009; Moreel, La société populaire, 145.


51. Lombard, Un volontaire de 1792, 217; AN, AFn234, dossier 2013, 22 Dec. 1793.

52. AN, D 2 1.

53. Scott, “Line Army, 1787-1793,” 236; Desbrière and Sautai, La crise, 246; Dupuis, La campagne de 1793, 1:311.


55. Biron in Soboul, Les soldats, 169; AN, AFn242, dossier 2072, 26 Aug. 1793; Argus, #217 (20 Dec. 1792).

56. 12 Aug. 1793 letter in Dupuis, La campagne de 1793, 1:312; AG, B118, 14 Sept. 1793; Jourdan in Charavay, Correspondance de Carnot, 3:314.

57. The stories surrounding Charbonnier are both amusing and disturbing. One
day when he was eating, an aide rushed in to report, “General, the enemy is attacking your lines.” “Yes then, they will be well received!” replied Charbonnier. “But, General, aren’t you going to join your troops?” “My troops!” cried Charbonnier, “Oh, don’t worry, they are all tough little dogs who know their business better than I do.” Thiebault, Mémoires, 1:446.

58. AP, 83:179–82, 193–203; RACSP, 15:283; Berthaud, La Révolution armée, 183.
61. For absenteeism, see Grille, Lettres, 1:23; Duchet, Deux volontaires, 51–52; for women, see Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:230–31; Six, Les généraux, 24–25.
63. Père Duchesne, #321; 23 Nov. 1793 circular is in Herlaut, Bouchotte, 1:254; AP, 78:92–93; see also Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:135.
64. Roch Godart clubbed two of his men who addressed him in this fashion. Godart, Mémoires, 26.
65. Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:133; AG, X73, folder 4, 27 Nov. 1793.
68. AG, MR 291.

Notes to “Discipline in an Army of Citizen-Soldiers”

1. Dubois-Crance, Observations, 2.
3. Argus, #79 (10 July 1792). Martin, “Journaux d’armées,” 594, argues that “the new conception of discipline is thus inseparable from a constant effort of explanation. . . . The army journals were a means of instruction to found this new order in the army.” The Argus was full of appeals for discipline in May 1792.
5. Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:133; AG, B1106, 13 Nov. 1793.
6. Coutanceau, La campagne de 1794, part 1, 1:xliii.
7. Michon, La justice militaire, 9.
8. Ibid., 27.
10. Michon, La justice militaire, 61, states that tribunals were established in the Nord in August and September. But two letters by Representative Laurent with the Nord complain that the tribunals still had yet to be set up properly in December. AG, B23, 21 Dec. 1793; AG, B11415, 27 Dec. 1793. See AP, 72:617, for an August 1793 compte rendu of why tribunals were slow in forming.
11. Michon, La justice militaire, 38.
13. Marquant, Carnet d’étapes, 31. A similar regulation was issued as late as the siege of Lancrecies in April 1794. Coutanceau, La campagne de 1794, part 2, 1:663.

16. Charavay, *Correspondence de Carnot*, vol. 2; see correspondence of Representative Laurent, AG, B’23, 21 Dec. 1793, and AG, B’12*15, 27 Dec. 1793.


18. AG, B’1*22, 10 May 1794, order from Guise; AG, B’1*146, 29 Apr. 1794; Mathiez, *La victoire*, 194; Michon, *La justice militaire*, 63; Bricard, *Journal*, 102, 105–6.


24. AG, X’2, 27 Mar. 1793; AG, X’97, 4 Mar. 1794; Charavay, *Correspondence de Carnot*, 2:73; AG, X’96, printed order from Dunkirk; AG, B’12*28, 19 Nov. 1793.


30. AG, X’73, 2 Nov. 1793.

31. AG, X’78.


37. See order of 29 Apr. 1794, AG, B’1*146; Bricard, *Journal*, 113.

38. AG, B’10, 18 Mar. 1793; Charavay, *Correspondence de Carnot*, 2:260.


40. Ibid., 79.


42. AG, B’121; AG, B’137 bis.; RACSP, 13:76–77; AG, B’12*15, 14 Dec. 1793.

43. By an act of the Convention of 1 June 1794, general officers sentenced to death were to be executed at the head of their troops.

Notes to “The Political Education of the Armée du Nord”

1. Two unpublished mémoires de maîtrise deal with political education in other armies of the first Republic. Sibon-Cattaui, “L’éducation politique à l’armée des Pyrénées-Orientales en l’an II,” and Delarue, “L’éducation politique.” My research on political education in the Nord was greatly aided by the work of Delarue.


3. Concerning plans for 14 July celebrations in the territory occupied by the Nord, see Legrand, “Les fêtes civiques,” 378–80, for Abbeville; AG, X*83, 6 July 1792, for Arras; Marquant, Carnets d’étapes, 48–49, for La Capelle; and Argus, #83 (13 July 1793), for Valenciennes.

4. See Mathiez, La victoire, 48–59, for 1791 volunteers, and 74–75, for 1792 enrollment in Paris; for blessings, see pieces concerning Somme battalions in 1791 in AG, X*96; and AN, D*16, 5 Sept. 1792.

5. Scott, Response of the Royal Army, 98–99. De Cardinal, La province, 342–44, argues that the 8 May decree simply recognized the status quo; to gauge soldier membership, see figures for Lille club in Leelu, La société populaire de Lille; address by the president of the Bergues club to men of the 78th Regiment in April 1791 in Moreel, La société populaire, 59–60.

6. Moreel, La société populaire, 62–63; De Séregignan, La première invasion, 6; and Argus, #8 (10 Apr. 1792).

7. Argus, #52 (2 June 1792).

8. AG, B*2, 29 June 1792; Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 76.

9. AP, 52:513–14. The letter that precipitated the Convention’s decision was sent by Representatives Georges Doucet, E.D.E.J. Duquesnoy, and Jean-Marie d’Aoust from Lille on 14 Oct. AG, B*8, 1 Jan. 1793; and orders of the day filed in AG, B*8–12 and in B*121.


15. Representatives Doucet, Duquesnoy, and d’Aoust to the Convention, 14 Oct. 1792, in RACSP, 1:142. This letter argued for the regular distribution of the Bulletin.

16. Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:82.

17. AN, AF*242, 12 May 1793.

order opens up the possibility that the subscription to the *Père Duchesne* was an afterthought imposed by the political complexion of the Ministry of War.


20. The mémoire was written in the 1820s or early 1830s as a response to the writings of Adolphe Thiers. Much of it was published by Bouchez and Roux in their *Histoire parlementaire*, 31: 234–38.

21. Unless otherwise stated, the figures listed in this section for the size and cost of subscriptions have been taken from two financial accounts presented by Bouchotte to the Committee of Public Safety in ventôse and germinal year II. These accounts have been reproduced in Herlaut, *Bouchotte*, 2:96–100, and in Mathiez, “La presse subventionnée,” 112–13.

22. Herlaut speaks of 8,000 copies of the *Père Duchesne* going out before the rise to 12,000 in September. Herlaut, *Bouchotte*, 2:86. See AG, B13*06, 24 May 1794 order; AG, B13*06, 17 Sept. 1793 order; and AG, B13*13, 14 Mar. 1794 order.

23. The original order was 2,000 copies, but Bouchotte’s 1794 accounts list it as 3,000 copies. The best guess is that Bouchotte put it down as 3,000 copies for three months when he meant 2,000 copies for four months. Delarue, “L’éducation politique,” 154; AG, B13*13, 4 Oct. 1794, order.

24. The accounts published in Herlaut, *Bouchotte*, 2:100, state the figure as 1,200 copies, but the cost listed for the germinal subscription makes it clear that 1,200 is far, far too low a number. Delarue, “L’éducation politique,” 157–60, interprets the actual figure as 12,000. But a comparison of subscription cost with the reliable ventôse figures yields a total subscription of 10,200. The 1,200 must be a clerical error. There is at least one other in Herlaut’s transcriptions of the accounts.

25. RACSP, 6:396. The order here is for only 1,000 copies.


27. Herlaut, *Bouchotte*, 2:86, states that the *Publiciste* was sent to the armies.


32. Pache’s 1 Jan. 1793 order that the *Bulletin* would be sent and distributed to the troops stipulated that orders of the day must list which issues were to be distributed that day, and, if no *Bulletins* were received, that fact must also be stated in the orders. AG, B18, 1 Jan. 1793. This practice was continued through the first week of October but abandoned thereafter. The archives’ collection of orders of the day for the period prior to mid-April 1793 is hit or miss at best. What orders are available can be found in AG, B18–11. Two fine sources pick up from April on; these are registers of orders, AG, B1*121, Register of orders for the *Armée du Nord*, 18 Apr. 1793–5 Jan. 1794, and AG, B1*132, Register of orders given by General Pichegru, 9 Feb. 1794–7 Oct. 1794. These can be supplemented by orders in AG, B13 for the month of June 1793. Some similar orders for troops headquartered at Maubeuge can also be found in the B1 general correspondence series.

33. AN, AF III 232, 5 May 1793.

34. AG, B13, 27 June 1793, *commissaires* Celliez and Varin at Cambrai to Bouchotte; see AG, B13, 18 June 1793, Celliez and Varin to Bouchotte; AG, B14, 10
July 1793, Varin to Bouchotte; AG, B115, 21 July 1793, Celliez to Vincent; AG, X3, 28 Aug. 1793, Varin to Bouchotte; and AG, B115, 19 July 1793, Celliez to Hébert.

35. Letters of 24 and 27 June 1793 in Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:257; Custine order in ibid., 2:250; AG, B115, 19 July 1793, Celliez to Hébert; AG, B115, 19 July 1793, Celliez to Bouchotte; and AG, B115, 2 July 1793, Custine to the Committee of Public Safety.

36. AG, B115, 19 July 1793, Celliez to Hébert.

37. AG, X3, 19 Oct. 1793.


40. AG, B18, 1 Jan. 1793, Pache order; complaint of a soldier in Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 147.

41. AG, B12, 7 May 1793, order of the day from Valenciennes; Martin, “Les origines de la presse militaire,” 590; AG, B1200, 16 June 1793, order by Hulin.

42. AG, B113, 12 June 1793.


44. The first issue of Soirée praised the style of Père Duchesne, while attacking its politics. See Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 216–17.

45. Hébert, who had no love at all for priests, relentlessly hammered at the church only in the issues of October and November 1793. Delarue, “L'éducation politique,” 216, claims that after a spurt in October, “anti-clericalism hardly played any part in the education given to soldiers.” Père Duchesne, #301, 7.


47. Père Duchesne, #296, 1–2; Soirée de camp, #2 (22 July 1794); and Père Duchesne, #342, 2–3.


50. Père Duchesne, #346, 7.

51. Delarue, “L'éducation politique,” Appendix II.

52. AG, Ordonnances militaires, 20 Feb. 1793; Delarue, “L'éducation politique,” Appendix II; AG, B113, 30 June 1793, Celliez to Bouchotte; Bouchette in Delarue, “L'éducation politique,” 141; Bouchette in Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:121; RACSP, 6:576; AG, B1121, 29 Aug. 1793.

53. AG, B123, 16 and 17 Dec. 1793, Celliez and Berton to Bouchette; AG, B115, 19 July 1793, Celliez to Hébert.

54. Constant Pierre's count runs as follows: 1789—116; 1790—261; 1791—308; 1792—325; 1793—690; 1794—701; 1795—137; 1796—126; 1797—147; 1798—77; 1799—90; and 1800—25. Pierre, Les hymnes et chansons, 34. Rogers, Spirit of Revolution, 14–15, argues that Pierre dates many songs too early, so he underestimates the surge of songs under the Convention. Pierre, Les hymnes et chansons, 2–3, 7–30, 50; Rogers, Spirit of Revolution, 7–8, 10–11; RACSP, 8:570.
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56. Gervais, A la conquête, 19; Chansons patriotiques, chant VII (Paris, 1792), advertisement.
57. Soirée du camp, #1 (the decade was the revolutionary week); Pion des Loches, Mes campagnes, 8–9; see as well Chuquet, Lettres de 1792, 301; Noël in Mathiez, La victoire, 95; and Chuquet, Les guerres de la Révolution, Jemappes, 92–102.
58. Chaumette before the General Council of the Paris Commune in Journal de Paris, #270 (27 Sept. 1793).
59. AG, B132.9, 67 and 159; Herlaut, Bouchette, 2, 98; Rousseau in Pierre, Les hymnes et chansons, 132–33.
61. Ibid., 70. Copies of the Ame were neither numbered nor dated and are best differentiated by the title of the first song they contained. Six consisted of sixteen pages, and one had only four. Rogers, Spirit of Revolution, 301.
62. Journal de Paris, #263 (20 Sept. 1793) and #270 (27 Sept. 1793); Potevin et al., Le sans-culotte.
63. AN, AFb129, dossier 991, 25 Jan. 1794.
64. See Pierre, Les hymnes et chansons, 70–72, on Rousseau.
65. Ibid., 70. Copies of the Ame were neither numbered nor dated and are best differentiated by the title of the first song they contained. Six consisted of sixteen pages, and one had only four. Rogers, Spirit of Revolution, 301.
74. The song Hébert so praised is printed in the Journal de Paris, #263 (20 Sept. 1793).
75. "Chant de guerre," in Rousseau, L’âme du peuple et du soldat; Rousseau, Chants du patriotisme, #29; Chansonnier de la Montagne, 27; "Quelles vains reproches" in Piis, Chansons patriotiques, 24; and Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 151.
76. Loy, "Le livre de route," 402–4. The romances were remarkably sentimental. Off-color lyrics were not unknown, but the songs were not usually bawdy.


78. Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 129.

79. AG, B114, 8 July 1793, letter from headquarters at Cambrai.

80. Bricard, Journal, 67; AG, B114, 10 July 1793, Celliez to Bouchotte.


83. Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 139.

84. AN, AF233, dossier 2009, order of 18 Sept. 1793; B1*23, 30 Dec. 1793, Celliez to Bouchotte; Moreel, La société populaire, 145, 190.

85. AG, B1*22, 17 Nov. 1793; AG, B1*20, 4 Dec. 1793.

86. Gossuin's attack on Bouchotte in the Convention 12 August 1793 in Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:48.

87. Brinton, Jacobins, 201.

88. AG, B1*27, 19 Feb. 1794.


91. AG, B1*27, 13 Feb. 1793, Lespomarédy to the Committee of Public Safety; Dessevives du Dézert, Lettres du sergent Brault, 11.


93. Ibid., 752; AN, AF234, dossier 2019, Guiot to Committee of Public Safety.

94. 6 Nov. 1793 letter in Chuquet, Lettres de 1793, 284–86; AG, B1*23, 30 Dec. 1793, Celliez to Bouchotte; AG, B1*133, 28 Feb. 1794.

95. Duchet, Deux volontaires, 34; Herlaut, Bouchotte, 2:99; AG, B1*29, piece 127, 12 Dec. 1793; Wallon, Les représentants en mission, 5:54, 127. In Lorient actors received draft exempt status from the Representatives on Mission in November 1793, since "the theatre which has always [à toujours du] been the school of morals is now the only patriotic school, since national education is not yet in existence [constituée]." Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 119.

96. AG, B1*121; Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 23.

97. Concerning cockades, see AG, B1*199, 28 May 1793. The Convention voted the decree against white uniforms on 6 May, and it first appeared in the Armée du Nord orders of 8 May. Continued reminders were issued by Bouchotte as late as August. See AG, B1*15, order of 11 Aug. 1793. On buttons see AG, B1*121, 21–22 Aug. 1793, order of the day, and Bertaud, La Révolution armée, 73–74. For flags see Journal militaire, 2 Dec. 1792, and AG, B1*15, 13 Oct. 1793.

98. Duchet, Deux volontaires, 96; Dubois-Crancé, Rapport sur l'embrigadement, 13–14; Dubois-Crancé in Jaurès, L'armée nouvelle, 169–70.

100. *Soirée de camp*, #10 (29 July 1793); E. Picard, *Au service*, 117.

101. AG, B113, 12 June 1793, Celliez and Varin to Bouchotte.


**Notes to "The Ordinaire and Motivation"**

1. The infantry *ordinaire* is defined in the following regulations: *Règlement provisoire sur le service de l'infanterie en campagne* of 5 Apr. 1792; *Instruction provisoire sur le campement de l'infanterie* of 1 Mar. 1792; and *Règlement concernant le service intérieur, la police, et la discipline de l'infanterie* of 24 June 1792. For the unit size of line infantry, see *Règlement sur la formation des bataillons d'infanterie destinés à entrer en campagne* of 15 Mar. 1792. For volunteer bataillons see the law of 4 Aug. 1791 in AP, 29:712–73. For cavalry see *Ordonnance...sur la formation...de la cavalerie* of 17 Mar. 1788. For artillery organization, see Lauerma, *L'artillerie de campagne*, 116. Squads of artillerymen attached to infantry demi-brigades contained fourteen men only. *Journal militaire* (1793), 776. Legislation of 12 Aug. and 22 Nov. 1793, which increased battalion size to 777 and then to 1,067, maintained the size of fusilier *ordinaires* at thirteen or fourteen men. AP, 72:83–84; 79:649.

2. For a list of soldier's basic equipment, see *Journal militaire* (1791), 627.

3. In the morning meat and dried or fresh vegetables would be cooked in a large wrought-iron pot called a *marmite*. After boiling, the meat was removed and set aside for the afternoon meal. Broth and vegetables were then divided. Half the soup was poured out into the lid of the *marmite*, bread added, and finally portioned out. This recipe for soup and the description of cooking it came from a 1788 or 1789 description of a field test of the new sixteen-man *marmite*. AG, MR 1772. The official ration for a French soldier in the year II was: 1 pound of meat, 1¾ pounds of bread, 1 ounce of rice, and 2 ounces of dried vegetables. Bertaud, *La Révolution armée*, 245. For changes in their allotment, see *Journal militaire*, (an II), 866. The *marmite* before 1788 was large enough for eight men; later *marmites* were large enough for sixteen. Both types were used during the early years of the war. *Instruction provisoire sur le campement de l'infanterie* of 1 Mar. 1792.

4. *Instruction provisoire sur le campement de l'infanterie* of 1 Mar. 1792.

5. The *Règlement sur la formation des bataillons d'infanterie destinés à entrer en campagne* of 15 Mar. 1792; *Règlement concernant l'exercice et manoeuvres de l'infanterie* of 1 Aug. 1791; *Ordonnance...sur la formation...de la cavalerie* of 17 Mar. 1788. For a useful chart concerning the characteristics and crews of French cannon, see Chandler, *Campaigns of Napoleon*, 358–59.

6. AG, B1*121, order of 22–23 Apr. 1793; AG, B1*121, order of 13–14 May 1793. For the intention to honor regulations scrupulously in other armies, see, for example, Colin, *La tactique et la discipline*, 22–23, 169.

8. See Dumouriez’s request for camp equipment in La Jonquière, Jemappes, 96–97; Journal militaire (1793), 33; Charavay, Correspondance de Carnot, 2:173.

9. AG, B’28, 27 Mar. 1794, Souham to Pichegru. An order issued 22 Apr. 1793 also implies that for the main body of the Armée du Nord there were sufficient camping supplies in the magazines. AG, B’121. For comments on tents and encampments, see Duchet, Deux volontaires, 39, 41, 59; Bricard, Journal, 4; Gervais, A la conquête, 39; Grille, Lettres, mémoires, et documents, 3:160; Mathiez, La victoire, 95; Lombard, Un volontaire de 1792, 154; Terrade, “Journal d’un volontaire,” 270.

10. See, for example, Bricard, Journal, 106, 113; Delaporte, “Campagne de l’an II,” 342; Dessewys du Désert, Lettres du sergent Brault, 13; AG, B’22, 26 Nov. 1793, Ferrand to Bouchotte. Men without tents might also sleep in the open air.

11. Gervais, A la conquête, 28–30; Noël in Mathiez, La victoire, 84–85; see the song “La gamelle” in Soirée de camp, #8 (27 July 1794), 4.

12. See Duchet, Deux volontaires, 41; Bonneville, Journal d’un volontaire, 23; Noël in Mathiez, La victoire, 95.


15. One particularly useful report concerns the 2nd Pas-de-Calais, a battalion of 1791 volunteers serving with the Armée du Nord. AG, X’78. This unusual piece lists the names of 205 deserters, the company to which they belonged, and the days they deserted for the period October 1791 through December 1792. Before the victories of the fall of 1792, a soldier would have had to break military law and the moral code of his fellows to desert. Deserters consequently left as individuals in most cases (seventy-two) before 25 Nov. 1792. Interestingly, there were ten cases in which pairs of men from the same company left on the same day, presumably together. This suggests that buddy relationships were important. It is equally significant that there was no desertion by groups larger than two. Since the men of the 2nd Pas-de-Calais were Volunteers of 1791, they had enlisted to serve only one campaign. After the victory of Jemappes on 6 Nov. 1793, they would have felt free to leave the army as they wished, even if they had not received formal permission to return home. With little moral pressure against desertion, it soared. In the month between Nov. 24 and Dec. 28 the battalion lost 113 men. All but seven left in groups of from two to sixteen men from the same company. The pattern strongly suggests the formation of small groups within the company structure, which persevered even when the army itself no longer commanded the men’s obedience. These small groups, if the deserters were indeed this, seem to have been formed only within, not across, company lines. Scott reports that deserters often left in pairs during the ancien régime. Scott, Response of the Royal Army, 37.


18. Berthaud, La Révolution armée, 176.
21. AG, X°78.
26. AG, B°6, 13 Nov. 1792, printed report by Dubois-Crance; and 13 Nov. 1792 circular written by Jourdeuil in Hérault, *Bouchotte*, 1:254.
33. *Argus* #17 (10 July 1792); Lombard, *Un volontaire de 1792*, 152.
Notes to "The Cult of the Bayonet"

3. Dubois-Crance, *Observations*. Dumouriez used identical logic and also denied that French troops could be "reduced to the state of automatons." Dumouriez, *Mémoire sur l'armée*, 3.
6. AG, MR 2041, Meunier, "Changements en errata au Règlement de 1791."
7. General Hardy in AG, B'28, 6 Mar. 1793; Berthélemy in Dupuis, *La campagne de 1793*, 1:49; Committee of Public Safety decrees of 5 and 4 Mar. 1794, respectively, in Coutanceau, *La campagne de 1794*, part 1, 1:404.
8. Leclaire, *Mémoires et correspondance*, 91-92; Reinhard, *Carnot*, 2:80; Carnot in Coutanceau, *La campagne de 1794*, part 2, 1:5. Bouchotte reflected this directive when he wrote to Jourdan, who had just been reinstated and given command of the Armée de la Moselle. The letter ordered that French troops "without cease act offensively; it is necessary to haggle with our enemies no longer, but to march intrepidly at them and charge them with the bayonet as at Wattignies." Bouchotte's letter in AG, MR 6081, Jourdan, "Mémoires militaires."
9. A document must be mentioned here, although it was not composed by an officer of the Nord. Dated 22 Nov. 1793, this report by an officer in the Armée du Rhin points up the use of the bayonet in another portion of the French frontier. Unpublished elsewhere, it deserves notice. Concluding his lengthy criticism of a suggested reform in battalion organization and drill, the commander of the 41st Demi-Brigade wrote: "The war of today proves the uselessness of a bunch of maneuvers which are brilliant on parade and seductive in their mathematical precision; these vaunted tactics give way everywhere to the bayonet and the charge; therefore, it is to the perfecting of the bayonet and the order and manner of making use of it that military men ought to direct their attention." AG, MR 2041, "Observations du commandant du bataillon de la 41e Demi-Brigade." The above comments take on all the more meaning because of a postscript by General Mangaud, apparently the commander of the division of the Bas Rhin: "The undersigned general has found the observations made by the commanders of the 41st demi-brigade Bas Rhin . . . , very valid."
11. For a discussion of the rationale behind the resurrection of the pike, see Lynn, "French Opinion and the Military Resurrection of the Pike."
12. AG, B'13, 25 June 1793; AG, B'18, 14 Sept. 1793, letter by General Beauregard.
14. AP, 47:265-66; for example, the 10e bataillon des piquiers at Lille in AG, B'18250, 1 Mar. 1793, Tableau; Jomini, *Histoire critique*, 4:123.
15. AG, B'18243, correspondence of General Gougelot.
16. AG, B120, 19 Oct. 1793, General Elie; AG, B112, 4 Mar. 1793, General Dumouriez; and 14 May 1794, letter from Representatives Richard and Choudieu in Coutanceau, La campagne de 1794, part 2, annexes.


Notes to "Cavalry and Artillery in an Infantry Army"

1. The four-volume history by Edouard Desbricre and Maurice Sautai stands as the classic account of cavalry during this era. La cavalerie de 1740 à 1789. La cavalerie pendant la Révolution du 14 juillet 1789 au 26 juin 1794: La crise. La cavalerie pendant la Révolution du 19 juin 1794 au 27 octobre 1793: La fin de la Convention. La cavalerie sous le Directoire. Fortunately for this study Desbricre and Sautai emphasized the Armée du Nord in their La crise. In this chapter, unless otherwise cited, the tactical and organizational details concerning cavalry have been taken from La crise.


3. Scott, Response of the Royal Army, 5–6, and documents in Desbricre and Sautai, La crise, 6, 56–57, 151n.


5. Etat of 1 messidor an II, 19 June 1794, in Desbricre and Sautai, La crise, 293–96.


7. Calès and Massieu, 21 Aug. 1793, RACSP, 6:31; Gauthier's estimate in Desbricre and Sautai, La crise, 184.

8. AP, 76:240–42; 76:713.

9. Godechot speaks of more than 10,000 cantons in France. Les institutions de la France, 475. At six horses per canton this would yield over 60,000 horses, which when added to the 39,000 horses of September, adds up to the nearly 100,000 estimated by Desbricre and Sautai, La crise, 297.


12. Rothenberg argues that European armies prior to the Revolution contained 20–40 percent cavalry. Rothenberg, Art of War, 71. As specific examples that bracket the period consider the following cases. In 1758 the French army of the Lower Rhine boasted 112 battalions of infantry and 121 squadrons of cavalry with battalions of about 720 and squadrons of perhaps 170; the resultant proportion of cavalry was 20 percent. Kennett, French Armies, tables I, II. The Grand Armée of 1805 listed 226 battalions, 233 squadrons, and 161 companies of artillery and engineers. Manceron, Austerlitz, 79–80. With contemporary battalion and squadron strengths as shown by Chandler, Campaigns of Napoleon, 340, 352, cavalry strength amounted to about 23 percent including dismounted squadrons. In his 15 Dec. 1789 report to the National Assembly Wimpffen estimated than an army of 26,000 meant to fight in Germany should contain 5,000 cavalry, that is, 19 percent of the total number. AP, 10:587. The expansion of armies brought a general decline in the percentage of cavalry, and hard-pressed forces might have much less than 20 percent cavalry. Wellington had only 6 percent at Fuentes de Oñoro. Rothenberg, Art of War, 71.

14. Consider the 6th *Chasseurs à cheval* in mid-March. With an authorized strength of 1,020 men, it had 606 men and 63 horses on 15 Mar. 1793. Of these, 391 men were with the Nord and 305 were in depot. Desbrière and Sautai, *La crise*, 153.

15. Inspection reports in ibid., 194, 197–99; AG, B1*251, situation reports.


20. Ibid., 271; Bodinier, *“Les officiers,”* 67–68; Scott, *“Professionalization of the French Officer Corps,”* 37.


23. AG, B1*13, 1 June 1793; and AG, B1*16, 10 Aug. 1793. For anti-cavalry schemes advocating the pike, see AG, B1*15, 24 July 1793, Vézu; AG, B1*19, 23 Sept. 1793, Representative Delbrel; and the Gougelet correspondence in AG, B1*243, 26 Dec. 1794, 2 Feb. 1794.


25. The standard work on artillery is the excellent Lauerma, *L'artillerie de campagne*. When not otherwise cited, details on artillery matériel, organization, and performance have been taken from it.

26. Ibid., 99.

27. AG, B1*253.

28. AP, 59:165; an order of the day from Valenciennes, dated 23–24 May 1793, stipulated that “each squad of line artillerymen attached to battalions of the army” should submit an updated *état*. AG, B1*12; tableau of 8 June 1794 in AG, B1*253. The total number of effectives was 221,994, but this does not include the Armée des Ardennes. Of the gross figure, only 174,000 were listed as present under arms, giving an average of 1.3 battalion gun per 1,000 men.


32. AP, 76:713; AG, B1*253. These figures exclude the Ardennes.

33. The situation report of 8 June 1794 shows four entire companies, three half-companies, and parts of two others. AG, B1*253.

34. Manceron, *Austerlitz*, 79–80, quotes a report showing 396 guns for 212,000
men. Chandler, *Campaigns of Napoleon*, 360, claims the highest concentration of cannon was the 600 cannon at Leipzig.


38. *AP*, 84:430–31. Judging from situation reports of the Nord and Ardennes, the most likely centers for artillery schools and horse artillery depots were Douai and Lille.


40. See the description of the school by Pion des Loches, *Mes campagnes*, 20–49.


42. Using Nord figures of June 1794 already discussed, in a total of 345 to 415 pieces, 225, that is, 65 to 54 percent, were dispersed.

43. AG, B115, 28 July 1793, Kilmame to Bouchotte.


47. An 8 June 1794 tableau shows twelve stations for parts of eight companies. Only two companies were shown intact. AG, B115, 28 July 1793, Kilmame to Bouchotte.


50. Ibid., 35–36, 44–45, 97; Houchard, "Instruction," in Dupuis, *La campagne de 1793*, 1:323. Sir Harry Calvert wrote concerning practice before Houchard in 1793: "May 10, the Prussians and Austrians carried five of the enemies batteries; no guns were taken, owing to the enemy's practice of each night retiring their guns in the rear of their batteries and keeping them always limbered, ready to make their escape." Calvert, *Journals and Correspondence*, 73.


Notes to "Training an Evolving Infantry"

1. 15 Dec. 1789 address in *AP*, 10:387.

2. Colin, *L'infanterie au XVIIIe siècle*, for an account of the systems contained in both the *Règlement* and the *Instruction*.


4. Line infantry fired only two shots daily, not enough to develop real proficiency. But Representative on Mission Gillet stated that "carabiniers," elite light infantry, should be chosen from the best marksmen in a light infantry battalion. Certainly, then, the *tirailleurs* must have practiced more than line units.
5. Gervais, who supplies one of the best accounts of training during 1794, required three months of actual drill before he went on campaign. In that time he had finished the *école de soldat* and the *école de peloton* and had at least begun the *école de bataillon*. Gervais, *A la conquête*, 35–39. A letter in the Argus of 26 July 1792 stated that a recruit needed “three months of musket drill at least ... before he could render effective service.”


9. AG, B1*1, n.d. (This order must predate 15 Apr. 1792).


11. Ibid., 139–40, 156–57.


14. Situation reports from December 1791 to December 1792 contained in AG, B1*249.

15. AG, B1*4, 18 Sept. 1792, General Dumouriez.


22. In the order of battle dated 24 Oct. 1792 for Dumouriez's immediate command at Valenciennes, only thirteen 1792 battalions appear. Of these at least seven are from the Paris area. B1*249, 24 Oct. 1792.

23. For this battalion see Fricasse, *Journal de marche*; situation reports contained in AG, B1*250 and B1*251.

24. AG, B1*4, 7 Sept. 1792.


26. A decree of 5 May 1792 ordered that old battalions be augmented by 124 recruits; later this figure was raised to 226. Belhomme, *Histoire de l'infanterie*, 3:491; see Terrade, “Journal d'un volontaire.”


28. At least this is how Dumouriez explained it in *Mémoires*, 2:119.


32. Figures on the size of the Nord and on the number and size of its battalions
are based on the situation reports contained in AG, B*250-53. For a detailed set of figures and charts concerning these details, see Lynn, "Revolution on the Battlefield," 115-19.

32. AG, B*240, 29 Mar. 1793, the minister of war to Dumouriez; AG, B'11, 9 Apr. 1793, General Dampierre.

33. Commissioner Rolland ordered that each brigadier general report the strengths of his battalions. See, for example, B*121, 11-12 May 1793, order. Once it was decided that a battalion was to receive a definite number of recruits, men from that battalion were summoned to Sedan in order to fetch its contingent. One such order issued at Maubeuge read: "It will be commanded ... one captain, two sergeants, four corporals, and two drummers taken in each one of the 18th and 68th Regiments to go to Sedan, there to find recruits from the contingent." AG, B'12, 29 May 1792, order. Waiting at Sedan, the recruits who had marched in as groups ranging from a few men to entire battalions now formed into provisional companies of 100 men. AG, B'11, 21 Apr. 1793, Representatives. It is simply unclear whether the battalion representatives simply chose a quota of men or whether Commissioner Rolland assigned them particular individuals.

34. AG, B'12, 3 May 1793, Representative Deville.

35. AG, B'12, 3 May 1793, Representative Deville.

36. AG, B*121, 9-10 May 1793, order. Each company of the battalion was to furnish six men.

37. 16 Apr. 1794, letter by Representatives on Mission in Foucart and Finot, La défense nationale, 1:423; AG, B*121, 24 Apr. 1793, order; AG, B'12, 23 May 1793, order.

38. AG, B'12, 28 May 1793, General Custine.

39. Gay de Vernon stated that of 36,000 infantry at the Camp de César, 6,000 had no muskets. In addition, "many were without shoes or coats, and a great number have lost some pieces of their armament." Gay de Vernon, Mémoire, 184, 189.

40. AG, B*121, 29-30 May 1793, order; AG, B*104, 20 May 1793, circular; AG, B*105, 79, 80-82, 89-90; Lachouque, Aux armes citoyens, 214; Phipps, Armies of the First Republic 1:186. A law of 18 Apr. 1793 had demanded these examinations, but circumstances had delayed implementation; between 5 and 11 June Custine received review reports from fifty-two battalions outside the Camp de César.

41. Gay de Vernon, Mémoire, 196.

42. For the efforts to strengthen the camp, see AG 270, Leclaire, "Mémoire"; AG, B'11, n.d. Apr. 1793, letter by Varin and Celliez (misfiled, letter in fact dates from June 1793); AG, B*111, 19 June 1793, order; AG, B*111, 22 June 1793, order.

43. AG, B'14, 12 July 1793, order; Bricard, Journal, 78, speaks of firing practice twice a day at César; Gervais, A la conquête, 37.

44. AG, B'13, 18 June 1793, General Kilmaine; AG, B'15, 31 July 1793, General Ferrand.

45. AG, B*121, 3 June 1793, order; AG, B*111, 2 July 1793, order.

46. AG, MR 2041, Meunier, "Changements."

47. Gay de Vernon, Mémoire, 197. Contrary to Gay de Vernon's account, however, which argues that Custine and his generals set up one skirmish after another, most of the combats that find their way into the reports were small defensive engagements brought about by Allied probes. See AG, B'14, 2 July 1793, report; AG, B'14, 7 July 1793, report.
48. Bricard, _Journal_, 76; see training orders issued at Maubeuge in AG, B17, Aug. 1793, order and by General Wisch down on the Semoy in AG, B17, 21 Aug. 1793 order.

49. AG, B17, 22 Aug. 1793, General Barthélémy.

50. AG, B17, 23 Aug. 1793, General Houchard, "Instruction."

51. AG, B18, 5 Sept. 1793, order.


53. AG, B18, 3 Sept. 1793.

54. For example, see AG, B19, 20 Sept. 1793, administration of the Département du Nord; AG, B1223, 18 Sept. 1793, letter by Colonel Boguet.

55. AG, B17, 28 Aug. 1793, Representative Perrin; AG, B17, 28 Aug. 1793, Rochette; AG, B17, 27 Aug. 1793, Chaumont.

56. For the 30 July 1793 total, see Dupuis, _La campagne de 1793_, 1:7–24, 26–29.

57. _AP_, 75:252; 79:649; AG, MR 608, Jourdan, "Mémoires militaires"; AG, B1223, 4 Oct. 1793 and 8 Nov. 1793; AG, B19, 25 Sept. 1793; AG, B22, 8 Nov. 1793; AG, B1223, 4 Dec. 1793, General Jourdan.

58. Coutanceau, _La campagne de 1794_, part 1, 1:xviii, 347; AG, B133, 14 Feb. 1793, Representative Gillet. See Cobb, _Les armées révolutionnaires_.

59. Bricard reported that at Cambrai on 15 Dec. 1793 "the garrison was assembled on the place d'armes, and a strong detachment of the armée révolutionnaire was then disarmed; the soldiers were incorporated into every unit, and the commander was arrested." Bricard, _Journal_, 83.

60. See Coutanceau, _La campagne de 1794_, part 1, 1:354–55.


62. AG, B1223, 6 Nov. 1793, General Jourdan.

63. See AG, B1223, 17 Jan. 1794, letter by General Colaud; Gervais, _A la conquête_, 32; AG, B26, 25 Jan. 1794, General Ferrand; General Bertin to General Mareau in Coutanceau, _La campagne du 1794_, part 2, 2:annexes, 51.


66. _Fricassé, Journal de marche_, 21; Ernouf, _Souvenirs militaires_, 7.


68. Coutanceau, _La campagne de 1794_, part 1, 1:102; Gervais, _A la conquête_, 35; Ernouf, _Souvenirs militaires_, 12; Brault in Lachouque, _Aux armes citoyens_, 387.

69. AG, MR 273, General Lacroix; see as well Ernouf, _Souvenirs militaires_, 12; AG, B18, 5 Sept. 1793, General Vandamme, "Récit abrégé."

70. _Gillet_ in _Dupuis, Les opérations militaires, 509_.

71. See Coutanceau, _La campagne de 1794_, part 1, 1:387.

72. AG, B124, 25 Apr. 1794, General Souham; Coutanceau, _La campagne de 1794_, part 2, 2:360–61; AG, B33, 14 June 1794; AG, MR 291, General Duhesmes, "Mémoire militaire."


74. AG, B11, 25 Apr. 1794, General Lamarlière to Bouchotte; AG, B11, n.d.
Notes to pages 239–49

(probably June), Representatives Varin and Celliez; AG, B'13, 5 June 1793, Re- presentatives Varin and Celliez to Bouchotte.

75. AG, B'13, 5 June 1793, Representatives Varin and Celliez to Bouchotte; letter dated 11 Mar. 1794 in Emouf, Souvenirs militaires, 12.

76. AG, B'1*133, Representative Gillet to the National Convention; AG, B'28, 29 Mar. 1793, General Pichegru to Bouchotte; AG, B'30, 29 Apr. 1793, General Southam.

Notes to "Line and Column on the Battlefield"

1. Over the last decade three works in particular have presented balanced views of French infantry tactics. Bertaud, La Révolution armée, and Ross, From Flintlock to Rifle, both derived their treatments of revolutionary infantry tactics from my dissertation. Rothenberg, Art of War, reached a moderate conclusion apparently just by splitting the difference between extremes.

2. Only a foot separated the ranks one from another. This distance was to be measured from the chest of the man in the rear to the back of the man in front of him. If the men wore packs, then the interval would be measured from chest to pack, and the line would be correspondingly thicker.

3. See test results taken from Scharnhorst in Paret, Yorck, 273.


5. Colin, La tactique et la discipline, lxv, lxvii.

6. Meunier, Rapport; Kléber's instructions in AG, MR 291, Duhames, "Mém- oire militaire." Duhames stated that Kléber's instructions were the first written during the wars of the Revolution; interestingly enough, Schérer was present at the drafting of these instructions.

7. Further confusion results from the apparently loose definition of a line in the minds of some contemporary witnesses. Technically the linear formation was a rather tidy affair composed of reasonably well aligned ranks. But at times the term en bataille seems to have meant something far less regular. Consider, for example, Duhames's description of a 1793 infantry attack: "Is it necessary to go at the enemy to attack an outpost? A part of the force is detached en tirailleurs; the rest marches in line, moving off at a run without keeping ranks, leaving the flag in the rear, where it is often encountered after the combat, isolated without even ten men to guard it." Duhames, Précis historique, 155–56.

8. AG, B'30, 26 Apr. 1794, General Cacault.


10. AG, MR 273, Lacroix, "Précis des opérations."

11. AG, MR 270, Leclaire, "Mémoire."

12. Documentation for Neerwinden is far sketchier than that for Jemappes; in fact, we scarcely know how they fought there. But Bricard supplies information that implies that the French were in line. In his journal for 18 Mar. 1793 he recorded, "Never have we seen such a multitude of men ranged in line [en bataille], as this day. Our army, divided in two columns, deployed in three lines." And later, describing the bravery of a certain Morel of the 5th Paris, he wrote, "This brave
fellow had his two thighs carried away by a cannon ball. . . . The same ball cut off a leg of each of the two volunteers who were in closed file behind him." Bricard, *Journal*, 39, 40–41. These two comments certainly indicate a linear order in three ranks. This is sparse information, but some of the best available.

13. AG, B’120, 19 Nov. 1793; General Elie; Arnaudin in Coutanceau, *La campagne de 1794*, part 2, 1:20.

14. AG, B’23, 6 Dec. 1793, General Durulte.


18. AG, B’30, 26 Apr. 1794, General Cacault; AG, MR 273, Lacroix, “Précis des opérations.”

19. The columns detailed by the *Règlement* are listed below.

A. Column by division—
   - at full distance,
   - at distance of a peloton,
   - at distance of a section, closed

B. Column by pelotons—
   - at full distance,
   - at distance of a section, closed

C. Column by sections—
D. Attack column
   - at full distance

“At full distance” means that the intervals between the subdivision of a column were equal to the front of that subdivision. Thus, a column at full distance could deploy into line by a series of quarter-wheels by its constituent elements.


22. The vagaries of battlefield reports require a fairly awkward categorization in pursuit of accuracy. In Table A.2 of the appendix, the three largest subcategories of “In the Attack” do not reflect different uses of the column, but rather different degrees of specificity in the evidence. Under “In the Attack: ‘Column’ Specifically Stated” appear all those examples gleaned from reports that actually called the assault formation a *colonne serrée*, *colonne d’attaque*, or *colonne*. Cases in which the explicit information states that a force attacked in good order and in mass fall under “In the Attack: The Charge ‘In Order’ and ‘In Mass.’” It would be most unlikely that this choice of words could describe anything other than attack columns, although one must be cautious in working with this evidence. Most difficult to handle, the third subcategory includes cases that appear to be column assaults, although a source only records that a bayonet assault occurred, perhaps as the commander ordered the charge to be beaten on the drums. In Table 4 this last group of examples receives the title, “In the Attack: The Charge ‘à la baionette’ and ‘battant la charge.’” To count as definite column usage every possible case would risk distorting the evidence, but to leave out all but the most obvious cases would result in underestimating the role of the attack column.

25. AG, B17, 7 Nov. 1792, Dumouriez; Dampierre in *La Jonquière, Jemappes*, 165.
28. AG, B30, 26 Apr. 1794, General Cacault; AG, MR 291, Duhesmes, “Mémoire militaire.”
29. AG, MR 291, Duhesmes, “Mémoire militaire.”
32. AG, B1*298, 7 June 1794, General Kléber.
33. AG, B112, 31 May 1793, order; AG, B117, 23 Aug. 1793, General Houchard, “Instruction.”
34. De Sérignan, *La première invasion*, 144; AG, B30, 26 Apr. 1794, General Cacault; AG, MR 291, Duhesmes, “Mémoire militaire.”
35. In other European armies the outer rank knelt, braced the butts of their muskets against the solid earth, and slanted their bayonets outward to impale any unlucky horse that ventured too near. The *Règlement du 1er août 1791* prescribed the feux de deux rangs, during which the first rank stood, but at least General Cacault’s report leads one to believe that in the Nord the first rank also knelt when facing cavalry.
38. AG, B30, Apr. 1794, General Cacault.

Notes to “*The Dimensions of Open Order Combat*”

2. Both Meunier and Duhesmes favored the smoothbore carbine as the best light infantry weapon. AG, MR 2041, Meunier “Changements”; Duhesmes in Paret, *Yorck*, 272.
4. AG, B1*22, 26 Aug. 1793, Minister of War.
5. For an example of infantry running up ammunition, see the letter by General Bertin, in Coutanceau, *La campagne de 1794*, part 2, 2:31. These runners were recruits who had no muskets. A picture and story in Championnet, *Le livre du soldat français*, 86, tells of a French cavalryman named Mandeville who carried sacks of cartridges to tirailleurs.
9. For reactions to this practice, see AG, B1*2, 16 July 1792, General La Bourdonnaye; Gouvion St. Cyr, Mémoires, 29.
12. Colin, La tactique et la discipline, lxviii; Le Couturier ibid., c; Paret, Yorck, 70.
16. For an extensive criticism of Duhesmes as a source, see Lynn, “Revolution on the Battlefield,” 255–66.
17. AG, B1*28, 1 Mar. 1794, Representative Varin.
21. Ibid.
22. AG, B117, 27 Aug. 1793, Representatives.
23. AG, MR 291, Duhesmes, “Mémoire militaire.”
27. AG, B117, 23 Aug. 1793, General Houchard, “Instruction.”
29 AG, B1*18, 5 Sept. 1793, General Vandamme, “Récit abrévé.”
31. AG, MR 2041, Meunier, “Changements”; and AG, B1*298, 5 May 1794, General Dessaubay.

Note to “Conclusion”
1. From Scharnhorst’s 1811 essay on infantry tactics in Paret, Yorck, 258.
I. ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Archives de la guerre, Vincennes

Materials in the Archives de la guerre (AG) formed the basis of this study. Series B contains the general correspondence of the Armée du Nord et des Ardennes, while B* 244–54 comprises the situation reports of the Nord and Ardennes through August 1794.

B* consists of correspondence registers for the Ministry of War; more such registers are catalogued under X. B* contains registers of orders from the Ministry of War.

The series MR, Mémoires et Reconnaissances, is a gold mine of reports, technical essays, and historical memoirs. Its rich funds have been catalogued by Louis Tuctey in Catalogue des manuscrits des bibliothèques de France . . . Archives de Guerre. 3 vols. Paris, 1912.

Series X provides the historian with a wealth of documents copied from departmental archives and collected at the Archives de la guerre. These pieces deal with volunteers and conscripts. They were collected by a military commission directed by General Dumont. Cartons dealing with different departments are of uneven quality and differing focuses.

Archives nationales, Paris

In preparing this volume, I was able to supplement the materials in the Archives de la guerre with cartons from series D and AF from the Archives nationales (AN). Series D contains correspondence of Representatives on Mission. The vital, and huge, series AF consists of the papers of the Committee of Public Safety, including their correspondence with Representatives on Mission.

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